Scheduled Caste, Scheduled Tribes, Freed Bonded Labourers and non SC/STs living below the poverty line in rural areas.

**Credit to Small and Medium Enterprises**

1402. SHRI SANTOSH BAGRODIA:
SHRI K.B. KRISHNA MURTHY:

Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the provisions of the recent policy package for stepping up credit to Small and Medium Enterprises sector enforceable;

(b) whether the said provisions are applicable for private sector banks too;

(c) if not, the reasons therefor; and

(d) what steps are being taken to bring the private banks under the purview of the policy packages?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI S.S. PALANIMANICKAM): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. The provisions of the recent policy package on stepping up credit to SME sector are enforceable by Reserve Bank of India. However, the one time settlement scheme for small scale non performing accounts (NPA) announced under the policy package is applicable to public sector banks only.

(c) and (d) Do not arise.

**Joint Study Group with Russia**

1403. SHRI JESUDASU SEELAM:
DR. T. SUBBARAMI REDDY:

Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether in an attempt to further strengthen relationship, India and Russia will set up a joint study group to explore possibilities of a comprehensive economic co-operation agreement;

(b) if so, whether while identifying banking and technology sectors as drivers of bilateral relationship with Russia, there was a need to ensure that issues of business visas did not hamper growth;